

May 21, 2026

RE: Southernmost Point Buoy Plaza Project

Madame Mayor, City Commissioners, Mr. Barroso, Ms. Downs, and Ms. O'Brien:

I am writing today representing both sides of my seven-generation Key West family.

The Artman/Blackwell side of my family has owned the homes at 1307 and 1309 Whitehead Street, where my grandfather was born and raised, for over 130 years. Rounding the corner, my mother-in-law, Ramona Santiago, has lived at 407 South Street for over 30 years. And continuing down the block, the Santiago side of my Family has owned and operated the Southernmost Point Guest House for over 40 years. It is where three generations of our family continue to live and work. That's a lot of history, which is why I am reaching out to you today as, unfortunately, we will be out of town for the June 4, 2026, City Commission meeting.

My husband and I have attended every meeting regarding the Southernmost Block going back to at least 2022, including the numerous Strategic Plan meetings at the Gato Building, years of Community Meetings in our southernmost neighborhood, District VI meetings at the Douglass Gym, and the City Meeting on May 14, 2026. We have met with previous, as well as current city engineers, on many different occasions including with Mr. Barroso, Mr. Bradshaw, and Mr. Bring on August 25, 2025, and again just two weeks ago with Mr. Bring, where he generously offered to meet with us on South Street to clarify city plans for the block. We very much appreciated the information we have received from these city officials during each of these. We have always felt listened to and truly heard regarding our input and concerns. As a family with residences on all three streets of this block, we feel that the current, most updated plans for this project are exactly where we need to be for drainage, traffic flow, and overall beautification.

We are excited for the prospect of the improvement of this beautiful plaza celebrating our beloved Southernmost Buoy and especially Bishop Al Kee's memorial statue, and we encourage the City Commission to vote in favor of moving forward with the current design so that plans stay on track and align with the anticipated 180-day completion timeline, prior to the beginning of Key West's high season.

Sincerely,

Denise Blackwell Santiago
Inocente Santiago, Jr.
Ramona Santiago
Inocente Santiago III
Talia Santiago-Jones
The Artman/Blackwell Family